



## **Testimony in Support of**

### **Raised S.B. No. 1017, An Act Concerning Election Administration**

### **Raised H.B. No. 6578, An Act Concerning Participation In The Electoral Process**

John Erlingheuser, AARP Connecticut  
Government Administration and Elections Committee • Wednesday, March 10, 2021

AARP is a nonpartisan, social mission organization that advocates for individuals age 50 and older. We have a membership of 38 million nationwide and approximately 600,000 in Connecticut. We advocate at the state and federal level for the issues that matter most to older adults and their families.

Honorable Chairs, Ranking Members and members of the GAE Committee, my name is John Erlingheuser and I am the Advocacy and Community Outreach Director for AARP in Connecticut. I am also a former Registrar of Voters, having served the City of Ansonia for 16 years. The right to vote is among the most basic of all civic and Constitutional rights. Recent elections, however, have revealed many flaws and practices that make it more difficult for citizens to vote. These include registration impediments, long lines, lack of early voting opportunities, inadequate facilities, equipment, and staff at polling places, and language barriers, among others.

AARP believes that policies should be enacted that encourage and promote maximum participation in the electoral process. Connecticut should adopt voter registration and voting systems and procedures that expand the range of voting choices for all residents. S.B. 1017 and H.B. 6578 would help in facilitating those changes.

### **S.B. No. 1017, An Act Concerning Election Administration**

Lines 1-19 of sections 1 and 2 of the bill would make permanent the Secure Ballot Drop Boxes permanent. These drop boxes were implemented during the 2020 primary and general elections to facilitate a safe and secure voting experience because of the Covid 19 pandemic. State statues must be changed in order to continue to use these drop boxes, which were funded through the federal Cares Act. The secure drop boxes proved to be very popular and AARP members took advantage of them in larger numbers. AARP fully supports this provision of the bill.

Section 10 of the bill allows The Secretary of the State to create digital systems to apply for absentee ballots and other forms using electronic signatures. AARP fully supports this acomidation to make the absentee ballot process as well as other voter processes more user friendly.

AARP take no positon on other sections of the bill.

### **H.B. No. 6578, An Act Concerning Participation In The Electoral Process**

Sections 2 and 3 of the bill deal with codifying Connecticut's existing automatic voter registration system. AARP fully supports this provision and encourages its expansion.

AARP takes no position on other sections of the bill.

Thank you for your time and efforts. I can be reached at [jerlingheuser@aarpp.org](mailto:jerlingheuser@aarpp.org).